



# MODERNIZATION PROJECT

*News*

VOLUME I

SUMMER 2015

Welcome to the **first edition** of the *I-94 Modernization Project newsletter*. While future editions will cover a variety of I-94-related topics, this first issue aims to answer specific questions that we know are of interest to our stakeholders, particularly “Why modernize the I-94 freeway?”

The I-94 freeway in Detroit was originally constructed from 1947 to 1959 and has never been rebuilt. While it was an engineering marvel in its time, it now bears few of the features associated with safe, modern freeway design. After 60 years of operation, I-94 has exceeded its useful service life. The need to modernize it can be summarized in three words: Condition, Safety and Economy.

In revitalizing I-94, MDOT is committed to “right-sizing” the project to fit into, and serve the needs of the community for today and the future. Our goal is to create an environment that will benefit all users, including bikes and other nonmotorized vehicles, pedestrians and future transit options.

While some elements of the I-94 redesign are determined by federal safety requirements, such as replacing short acceleration ramps and removing left entrance and exit ramps, others are not. MDOT still wants the community to weigh in on some key

final design decisions regarding continuous service drives, community connector and pedestrian bridges, and the John R Bridge.

You can do so by reviewing the questions outlined in this newsletter and submitting your feedback at the upcoming **I-94 Open House Events on Tuesday,**

**July 14 at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Detroit and Thursday, July 16 at Wayne County Community College (Eastern Campus).**

Can't attend? Give MDOT a call or send us an email. Your input is necessary to help us right-size I-94. See page 7 for

meeting details and contact information.

I-94 is one of the primary gateways into the city of Detroit and an important link in the infrastructure that supports local, regional and national mobility, and economic interests. Working together, we can create a safe, modern I-94 that will serve everyone now and in the future.

*Jonny Kratofil*

MDOT Metro Region Engineer





Project Map



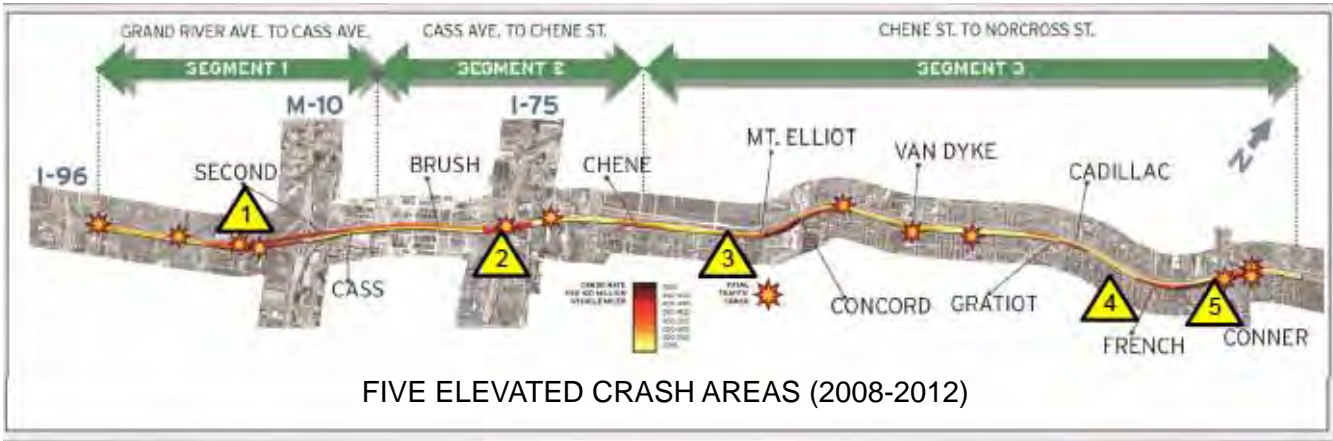
The I-94 Modernization Project involves reconstructing 6.7 miles from east of the I-94/I-96 interchange to east of Conner Avenue in Detroit. In addition to reconstruction, the project currently includes:

- Rebuilding 67 bridge structures and six railroad over-passes
- Local access improvements, including the linking of

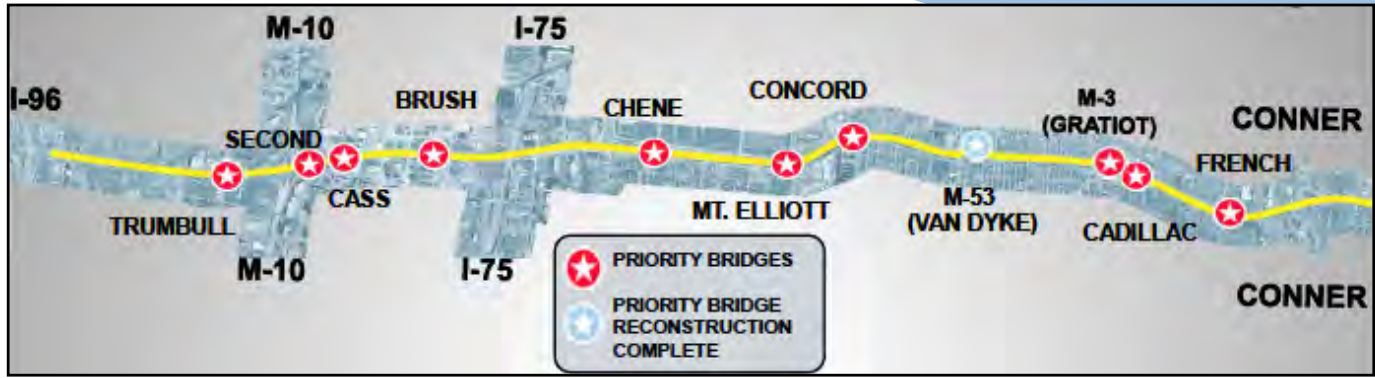
east/west I-94 services drives

- Reconstruct and modernize interchanges, including the elimination of freeway left-lane exits and entrances
- Note: While the project is divided into three segments based on geographic boundaries, reconstruction will not necessarily proceed in segment order.

Project History and Timeline



Why Modernize I-94?



1. To Improve Road Safety Condition

The currently constructed I-94 freeway features:

- Antiquated left-lane exit and entrance ramps
- Poor sight distance around curves
- Substandard shoulders
- Short acceleration ramps that prevent motorists from safely picking up speed before entering the roadway

A seven-year safety analysis (2005-2011) shows:

- Five elevated crash areas
- More than 4,000 crashes resulting in 1,815 injuries
- Sideswipe, rear-end and single-vehicle as the top three crash types, all indicators of a true traffic congestion and outdated design issues

2. To Improve Bridge Safety Condition

A common sight along I-94 are bridges with plywood underlays to protect motorists from falling concrete. To guard public safety, these structures have undergone extensive maintenance over the years and are inspected with greater frequency. However, like the freeway itself,

after 60 years the bridges have exceeded their intended service lives. The I-94 Modernization Project includes reconstruction of high-priority bridges that are in critical or poor condition. They are listed in the chart above and will be replaced prior to the start of freeway construction.







### 3. To Support the Local, State and National Economies

While more than 100,000 people are driving I-94 daily to work, school or entertainment venues, I-94 is driving the economy:

- More than 10,000 trucks per day carry more than 20 million tons of cargo, valued at \$28 billion annually
- These commodities support 2.4 million Michigan jobs
- Detroit and Port Huron, both located at the Canadian border, are among the top 10 U.S. foreign trade gateways

### 3. Pedestrian Bridges

Background: Pedestrian bridges allow walkers, bikes and other nonmotorized vehicles to cross over the freeway. The I-94 Project will replace several pedestrian bridges along the corridor.

**Question: Are there locations along the corridor where you think pedestrian bridges are needed? If so, where?**



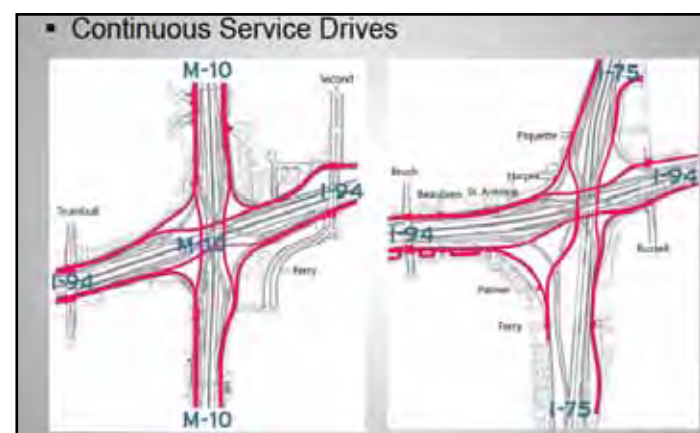
## AREAS FOR PUBLIC INPUT

### 1. Continuous Service Drives

**Background:** Right now there are service drives along most of I-94, but none along I-94 through the I-75 or M-10 interchanges. You can exit I-94 eastbound at Trumbull Street, but the road ends immediately at the M-10 Freeway. Linking these service drives would:

- Enhance local mobility
- Relieve congestion by giving traffic moving east or west -- to Midtown or Tech Town, for example -- a more direct option instead of returning to the freeway or using local streets.

**Question: Should MDOT link the service drives at the I-75 and M-10 interchanges?**



### 2. Community Connector Bridges

**Background:** Community Connector Bridges are enhanced freeway overpasses that accommodate motorized and nonmotorized traffic with special features such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and opportunities for public art. By promoting local connectivity -- the ability to easily move within and between neighborhoods -- they help create walkable sustainable communities.

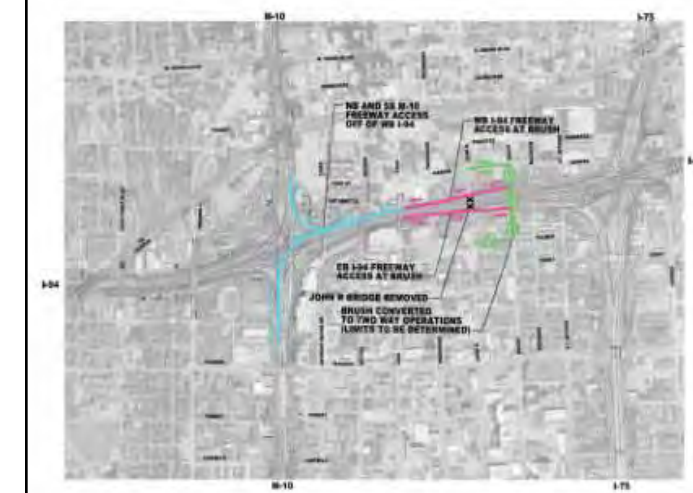
**Questions:**

**Where do you think community connector bridges should be located along the I-94 corridor?**

**Some of the features that community connector bridges may have are: wide sidewalks, bike lanes, public art, landscaping, enhanced lighting. Of these special features, which three are most important to you?**



### If the John R Bridge is replaced:



### If the John R Bridge is not replaced:



### 4. The John R Bridge

**Background:** The John R Bridge is slated to be removed as part of the original I-94 rehabilitation design plan. However, the Woodward Avenue Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis proposes that John R be part of a future bus rapid transit (BRT) route between downtown Detroit and downtown Pontiac. If the John R Bridge is replaced:

- North-south connectivity remains and everyone will be able to crossover the freeway just as they can today
- The preferred alternative for Woodward BRT can be built along John R
- The Brush Street service ramps would need to be removed so direct access to and from Midtown would change
- Eastbound and westbound I-94 traffic will need to enter and exit the freeway at Trumbull Street by utilizing the currently proposed continuous service drives that will be constructed through the M-10 interchange

If the John R Bridge is not replaced:

- North-south connectivity will be eliminated
- The Woodward BRT would need to follow an alternative route

**Question: Should the John R Bridge be replaced?**



A Different Kind of ATM

Have you ever attended an event at The Palace of Auburn Hills? Have you noticed those special traffic signals with green arrows or red X's that instruct you to travel in opposite direction lanes or on the shoulder when traffic is congested? That's Active Traffic Management, or ATM, at work. Using smart technology, ATM operates by easing traffic congestion levels in real time. In response to peak periods, accidents, construction or other temporary occurrences, it opens and closes auxiliary lanes to move traffic more efficiently.

MDOT is studying ATM as a means of handling traffic congestion on I-94 without building additional full-time lanes. Instead the shoulder of the I-94 freeway, regulated by ATM, would serve as an additional as-needed lane. This would provide at least one option for the modernized roadway to remain within the current freeway footprint. It would also preserve the grassy slopes along the freeway rather than replacing them with walls similar to those along I-696. More information to come as the study continues.

MODERNIZATION INNOVATIONS

Big Opportunities for Small Businesses

MDOT has created a mentorship program specifically tied to the I-94 Modernization Project. It will create new opportunities for Small Business Enterprise (SBE) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) design firms. The plan is to engage up to eight of these businesses to provide design support to prime bridge design consultant firms for the replacement of selected bridges along I-94. The effort is expected to begin as early as the fall of 2015.

Smaller firms will work on a number of key task areas including: Roads and Streets, Maintaining Traffic, Traffic Signing, Pavement Markings, Traffic Signals, Utility Design, ITS Design and Landscape Design. This program is not a traditional mentoring program, and firms were required to successfully respond to a request for proposals from MDOT to be considered.

In starting this new innovation, MDOT wanted to be sure that each firm had the support needed to succeed. To

provide that support and guidance, the department asked HNTB, Inc., (the firm serving as owner's representative for the I-94 Project) to develop a plan. What HNTB created offers business mentorship for the executives of each firm and technical training for the firms' design teams.

To ensure that SBE and DBE firms were aware of the program, MDOT held Industry Forum meetings in Lansing and Detroit earlier this year. The forums allowed the firms the chance to provide feedback to help shape a successful Mentoring Program. These events also offered opportunities them to connect with MDOT and learn how to complete the strenuous financial documentation required to be awarded the work.

This new initiative designed to help small firms gain hands-on experience has great potential for opening doors to future MDOT work and other business opportunities.

INTERSTATE

I-94 MODERNIZATION PROJECT COMMUNITY MEETINGS

WHEN/WHERE:

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

9 - 11 a.m.  
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Cathedral Church of St. Paul - Barth Hall  
4800 Woodward Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48201  
(Entrance off Warren Avenue just east of Woodward Avenue)

Thursday, July 16, 2015

2 - 4 p.m.  
6 - 8 p.m.  
Wayne County Community College District - Eastern Campus  
5901 Conner Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48213

For special accommodations, please call Cyrill Weems, HNTB at 313-961-3330 or cweems@hntb.com.



**BACKGROUND:**

*MDOT staff and the I-94 consultant team will share the latest project information, including updated traffic counts and design concepts for “right-sizing” the freeway. Opportunities for public input on continuous service drives, community connector and pedestrian bridges, and the John R Bridge.*



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

- Terry Stepanski, PE, Senior Project Manager  
stepanskit@michigan.gov, 517-241-0233
- Rob Morosi, MDOT Communications  
morosir@michigan.gov, 248-483-5107

**FOR MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT AND TO GIVE YOUR INPUT:**

- Visit the I-94 Project website: [www.michigan.gov/94detroit](http://www.michigan.gov/94detroit)
- [www.michigan.gov/drive](http://www.michigan.gov/drive)
- [www.twitter.com/MichiganDOT](https://twitter.com/MichiganDOT)
- [www.facebook.com/MichiganDOT](https://www.facebook.com/MichiganDOT)